

Questions Raised Regarding Afternoon Transportation from Theme Schools

Why was the decision made to eliminate afternoon transportation?

The decision to eliminate afternoon transportation was made due to the need to reduce the bus traffic on campuses in the afternoon, to reduce the time needed for afternoon supervision at the school for the dismissal process, to reduce the length of time of afternoon bus travel, trying to improve safety on campuses, and significant reductions in state and local funding.

Why so short a time period for implementation of change?

The initiation of a change in the afternoon transportation option was done in a short amount of time for various reasons. If a student must transfer to another school, the earlier that enrollment change can be completed facilitates student adjustment to the new school. Also based on parent decisions to participate in drop point pickup, the number of buses scheduled for the drop points can be determined. If parental decisions as to their student's enrollment in a theme or home school change, adjustments in the number of teachers assigned to schools based on the change in enrollments must be made. The earlier these changes can be made the better.

Length of time in car rider pickup line

The actual pickup time has been decreased at both schools from the time dismissal occurs until the time the last car/bus leaves the campus. Although car ridership has increased, with the number of buses reduced, the cars can be handled more efficiently in the short dismissal time. The total number of buses coming onto the two campuses in the afternoon was reduced to seven buses now dropping off at parent pickup points.

Class size policy

The maximum class sizes used for the Newton County Schools are the class sizes allowed by the state. The maximum number assigned to a class is as follows: K = 22 with a paraprofessional; grades 1-3 = 23; and grades 4-8 in English, Math, Science, and Social Studies = 30. Class sizes are monitored in the first weeks of school and modifications are made to add teachers as necessary.

Funding for the theme school as a whole

The minor changes in enrollment of the theme schools have not affected their funding levels.

Walkers to edge of property

Permission from the parent/guardian of an elementary and/or middle school student to walk to subdivisions adjacent to the schools will be secured.

Students walking beside a road

It is highly discouraged that students walk beside a major road for reasons of safety.

Medical issues of students being on crowded bus.

The buses serving parent pickup points have been adjusted for overcrowding. No bus at this time is overloaded.

The difference in Choice under No Child Left Behind and having choice to a theme school

The selection of a choice school under NCLB is granted because the home school is in Needs Improvement. Transportation was provided to that choice school in previous years. For the 2009-2010 year transportation is provided only by the parent with mileage reimbursement.

Parents may choose to attend a theme school rather than their zoned school, but transportation is to drop off/pickup points.

With enrollment in the school based on home residence, transportation from and to designated stops is provided for students.

After school program

The After School Academic Program staff is working to increase the number of certified teachers in the program so that more slots can be made available. Registration was reopened on Wednesday, August 19.

Seating on bus and supervision at drop off

As always occurs at the beginning of the school year, bus routes for all schools must be reviewed and adjusted to reduce the numbers of riders on a specific route. Review began Tuesday, August 18 and is continuing as we adjust routes to reduce numbers on overloaded buses.

How will safety at the parent pickups be handled?

The plan is to assign like numbers to each child and parent for pick up of students in an orderly fashion.

Overcrowding of classes

As numbers stabilize throughout the school system, additional classes may need to be added at schools or classes consolidated as teachers are moved from a grade or school. The maximum number of students in a class is based on the state's maximum class size requirements. Specifically for Fairview and Clements Theme Schools, a review was held Wednesday August 19, to determine the numbers enrolled in each class in each grade to determine the need for additional teachers to be moved within the school or from other schools.

School uniforms buy back

A procedure is being reviewed to determine what kind of buy back, if any, of uniforms can be instituted. The receiving home schools have been instructed to accept the wearing on their campuses of uniforms from the theme schools. The two attendance zones of Live Oak and Liberty do not have a required uniform dress codes other than the system adopted code printed in the student handbook.

Instructional materials

At the beginning of each year, the enrollment is reviewed to determine the instructional material needs. Materials are shifted from school to school and others are purchased when necessary.